Thursday teatime news from the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies

Hot off the press at 4pm-ish!

Issue 14: 11th June 2020

This week from Linda

This week at the CSLS General Purposes Committee we discussed how we should respond to the tragic circumstances surrounding the death of George Floyd. Several of you have written to me to make comments on my draft statement from the Centre and the text is much improved as a result. It has now been loaded on to our website and circulated as a news item. Spending time on the action points that arose from our discussion at GPC has taken up the time I would usually devote to the newsletter so I have decided to dedicate this issue to discussion about what we are already doing at the Centre, what more we could be doing and the conversations we need to have with others outside of the Centre. There is a danger that when scandalous events of the kind we have witnessed in recent weeks occur that there is a heartfelt but short-lived reaction. Several of you have expressed the importance of us sustaining our efforts to do more to hear the perspectives of people of colour, to give the views of marginalised scholars a platform and to reflect on the ways in which we are complicit in the production and re-production of inequality. So this weeks newsletter is not a report, it is a consultation. It is not an opinion piece it is the start of a collective effort. So the big question is where do we go from here?

Did you know? Black British graduate students are under-represented at Oxford making up just 1.9 per cent of UK graduate students enrolled at the University. The most recent census in the UK recorded that 9 per cent of the population are black.

The CSLS action plan

This week our GPC identified the following goals.

- To issue a statement about the death of George Floyd and the actions we were taking in response to it;
- To undertake a review of the curriculum for our methodology course to consider the extent to which we are setting texts by black authors or research on race;
- To devote the MT seminar series to the issues invoked by the Black Lives Matter movement and debate;

- To make the case for more studentships being made available by the Faculty for black students;
- To review our own finances and determine what contribution we could make to a studentship;

Several people have since got in touch with me to suggest the following:

- That we all play a role in raising awareness at College level of the need to establish more scholarships for black students;
- That in addition to making our own disgust at racist behaviour clear we also strive to ensure that we provide a platform for people of colour to talk to us about their research and to encourage them to challenge our practices;
- We discuss wider debates prompted by the UCU and SU about the minimum wage and celebration of colonialists at Oxford. This is particular pertinent in context of our Chancellor and Vice Chancellor giving interviews to the press this week about the statue of Cecil Rhodes at Oriel College.

Please do continue to contribute to this important debate and suggest ways in which we can work together in combating racism in the academy and beyond.

Staying Power

Dr Nicola Rollock

There are just 25 Black British female Professors in UK universities – the smallest group of Professors in terms of both race and gender. This disturbing statistics is the subject of a 2019 report by Dr Nicola Rollock, funded by the UCU, called *Staying Power (*https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/10075/Staying-Power/pdf/UCU_Rollock_February_2019.pdf). In her interviews with 20 of the 25 Professors Nicola found that black female professors are a new and emerging group of academics with the majority of those interviewed having been appointed Professor within the last five years. Only two of the sample had been a Professor for 10 years or more. She found that black female Professors experience a messy, convoluted and protracted path to Professorship. You can find out more about Nicola and her work here: https://nicolarollock.com/black-female-profs. Nicola is the author of *The Colour of Class: the educational strategies of the Black middle classes*, Routledge 2014.

Phenomenal Women

Diamond Ashigabor photographed by Bill Knight

'Phenomenal women' is said to be the first photographic exhibition honouring Britain's black female professors. The photographer responsible for this exhibition is Bill Knight who worked with Dr Nicola Rollock in puting the exhibition together. Featured here is his photograph of Professor Diamond Ashiagbor who gave the last seminar in the CSLS seminar series. Before becoming a photographer Bill enjoyed a successful career as a city solicitor. He joined Simmons & Simmons as an articled clerk in 1967, becoming head of the corporate department in 1994, and Senior Partner in 1996. After his retirement from the firm in 2001 he became Deputy Chairman of Council at Lloyd's of London, chair of the Financial Reporting Review Panel, a director of the Financial Reporting Council, and a Gambling Commissioner. He is now a professional photographer, with two portraits in the National Portrait Gallery. You can find out more about Bill Knight and see some of the other portraits he has done of Phenomenal Women at: https://www.theguardian.com/education/gallery/2020/mar/09/portraits-of-uk-black-female-professors-in-pictures. Bill has also written about the collection here: https://www.photomonitor.co.uk/phenomenal-women/

I came to know Bill through his work as a trustee of the National Life Stories project based at the British Library. We are planning to exhibit some of his photographs of black female professors at Wolfson College next year and this will be accompanied by a talk involving him and one of the women he has photographed.

The Michaelmas term seminar series

I would like to encourage suggestions about people we could invite to our MT seminar series which will be interrogating issues around the Black Lives Matter debate. As this series will take the form of webinars this gives us more scope abut who we could invite. The following speakers have been suggested so far but please do keep the suggestions coming: Kimberle Crenshaw; Sindis Mnisi-Weeks; Pratisksha Baxi; Patricia Tuitt; Rahul Rao; Stewart Motha and Jane Rendell. Please email Linda with other suggestions

PCMLP Global Media Policy Seminar Series: De-Centering the University in Knowledge Dissemination

We'd like to claim that we were preternaturally prescient. Last year, the Programme in Comparative Media Law and Policy launched a brand new online seminar series to share insights on media policy -- normally confined to small audience in Oxford -- with people all over the world, wherever they may be. That was long before the coronavirus pandemic forced all of us to isolate at home and conduct much of our lives on the internet. And as tempting as it may be to take credit for being ahead of the curve, we couldn't have predicted how our experiment in opening up Oxford-based scholarship to a broader constituency would wind up preparing us for the "new normal" of distance learning and communication.

I floated the idea for doing an online series in late 2018, and together with PCMLP Director Nicole Stremlau, and postdocs Eleanor Marchant and Roxana Radu, we developed its core mission of democratizing access to university knowledge. We were particularly concerned with bringing together insights from the global north and the global south in a field (media studies) that tends to be dominated by "experts" from North America and Europe. Media policy is much more diverse in practice than it appears in print, and we felt that universities could be doing more to spotlight this diversity of thought and increase the accessibility of that content. By broadcasting the seminar series online for free, we aimed to bridge the geographic and epistemic distance between Oxford scholarship and the broader global conversations around media and rights.

To facilitate this mission, the series is jointly organised between the PCMLP and the University of Johannesburg's School of Communication. We deal with pressing issues affecting new media and human rights, particularly at the margins, including (among others) algorithmic bias and inequalities; misinformation and elections; social media and migration; extreme speech online; community-driven internet access solutions; autonomous and feminist infrastructure; and privacy.

In April 2019, we kicked off the Global Media Policy Seminar Series with an interview with Chris Conder, one of the founders of the Broadband for the Rural North community internet network in Lancashire. It turned out to be a good example of how to make the most of the online format. I was on field work in north west England, interviewing volunteers for the network, and we livestreamed my interview with Chris from her farmhouse in the Forest of Bowland on YouTube Live. I could share my "field site" with a new audience back in Oxford and beyond.

After some experimentation (with hardware, software and different streaming platforms), we decided to stream our sessions using Zoom webinars and to host them entirely online (without an in-person audience) so that we could focus on the technical side of audience management and participation. Since then, we have welcomed speakers from Canada, India, and the United States – all joining us remotely! And we've had participants from all continents – we think (with the exception of Antarctica)! And, of course, our purchase of a Zoom subscription has wound up benefitting CSLS in

unexpected ways – as we all find ourselves needing to "Zoom" a lot more often these days.

Our hope is to expand the series and move beyond just *geographically* de-centering the university as the physical site of knowledge production/dissemination toward also de-centering the concept of "expertise" from the university -- to encompass multiple forms of knowing and a wide range of perspectives from academia, activism, private enterprise, and more. We have a long way to go, but we're excited to keep the momentum going.

You can check out our past seminars on our YouTube channel, and if you have suggestions of topics/guest speakers for upcoming livestream sessions, please get in touch: kira.allmann@csls.ox.ac.uk.

See further:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gFwKIJMuyKI&list=PLq9kWPD5OUgWSht2Ko9CXDkZUWmJii_ZK.

Rhodes must fall!

In the aftermath of George Floyd's death we have seen a resurgence of concern about who is memorialised in public statuary. Shruti offers her views on what has ben happening.

Students and campaigners in the University have come together in a remarkable way at this time. Not only did the Rhodes Must Fall protest outside Oriel College attract hundreds of students, campaign and pressure groups have mobilised quickly at this time. Common Ground, a student group tackling racism at Oxford, and the Oxford Student Union have both written separate open letters to the Vice-Chancellor and the University with a list of concrete demands. These demands are around diversity within the university (both among staff and students), the wage gap between Black and Minority Ethnic staff and white staff, racism within University and College spaces, the Eurocentrism of curricula, taking down memorials to known imperialists and racists, and highlighting the need to pay the Oxford Living Wage, a move that would directly benefit low-paid staff at Oxford who are disproportionately Black and Minority Ethnic. They have highlighted racist statements made by Oxford professors (including colonial apologia), the racism meted out to students on campus, the need for more welfare support, and on diversity training.

Rhodes Must Fall have also put out a statement with a list of demands. They are demanding that Oriel take down the statue of Rhodes, establish a reparatory scholarship for Black southern Africans; that All Souls do the same with acknowledging

the legacy of Codrington and renaming the library; and that Rhodes House rename the scholarship and remove iconography celebrating Rhodes. They have also demanded that the University issue an apology for the statement made by Vice-Chancellor Patten that students who have a problem with colonial iconography should 'study elsewhere' and that they establish a commitment to decolonising curricula and doubling the representation of Black students and staff. Several current Rhodes Scholars have also penned a letter with demands of the Trust, demanding material contributions to the Black Lives Matter movement, renaming several locations in the building (including Milner Hall, named after Alfred Milner) and divestment from funds that support the fossil fuel industry, the occupation of Palestine and the prison-industrial complex.

So while Vice-Chancellor Richardson warns that we may be trying to 'hide our history', these groups are showing us a way forward by allowing us a different vision of justice—one that reckons with history as well as contemporary injustice. Arguably, bringing these statues down allows us to reckon what a just university could look like more than any other recent developments have. Students are also showing us that justice means not averting our eyes but confronting the ways in which the lives we lead are implicated in ongoing process of extraction and dispossession, how the exclusion of Black people from Universities is linked to widespread cultural racism that has a long history, and that racial justice includes economic justice for low-paid workers. For those of us wondering what we can do to make the University a better place, there are so many active groups that could use your support—consider looking up Common Ground, Race and Resistance, the Oxford Living Wage Campaign (sorry, I couldn't not plug it!), Oxford Migrant Solidarity, Oxford Climate Justice Campaign, Oxford Against Schwartzman, Uncomfortable Oxford... and the list goes on. Solidarity!

CSLS Media Policy Summer Institute

Chikezie Uzuebunan and Monroe Price at the Summer Institute

For over 20 years the Media Policy Summer Institute has welcomed a diverse group of participants to Oxford to debate and discuss cutting edge issues about information law and policy. In recent years we have actively pursued an approach that engages colleagues from the global south as both participants and speakers. Last year, for the first time, the University of Johannesburg joined the University of Pennsylvania as a co-organizer of the institute further extending our reach in Africa. In 2019 our African participants came from Nigeria, South Africa, Ethiopia, Somalia, Zimbabwe, Uganda and Kenya. Some were sponsored by the organizations they worked for, their universities, or were supported by local branches of the Ford Foundation (Nigeria) and Open Society Foundations (Kenya). We always say that the richness of the Summer Institute comes from the conversations and the time spent outside of the classes, and having a very diverse group of participants is essential to these conversations. And it is not just geographical reach- we strive for participants with different experiences- from government regulators, early career academics and doctoral students, as well as those from the NGO or intergovernmental organizations.

We have also always looked to have outside speakers offering a variety of perspectives. In some cases they are alumni that come back to speak- last year, for example, former participants Jacob Udu Udu Jacob, now a professor at the American University of Nigeria, and Dr Paul Nwulu of the Ford Foundation in Lagos both joined us again, this time as speakers. We also welcomed two speakers that especially flew in to be with us – Abdirashid Duale from Hargeysa, Somaliland and Deeq Mohamed from Mogadishu, Somalia and speak about some of the practical projects they were engaged with relating to new technologies and the law. The friendship with Deeq started with an April Fools joke. Deeq had posted on Twitter how his food delivery company in Mogadishu, Gullivery- the UberEats of Somalia- was going to start to deliver food and groceries by drones. Given the precedents with technological ingenuity in Somalia (which has one of the most affordable and fastest internet connections in Africa despite decades of conflict), the lack of infrastructure, and the inaccessibility of many areas controlled by local militias, the idea made perfect sense! Too bad it was an April Fools. But it gave me the opportunity to get to know what Deeq is actually doing or planning including how he hopes to start using drones to help deliver medical supplies- and that he might, in the future, try to use drones for Gullivery. It also gave us the chance to hear from him in Oxford about how local entrepreneurs are navigating a very complex legal environment (including xeer or customary law, sharia law and patchy state law) to both turn a strong profit and address local demand for services.

Capturing the Moment

Events that shock us often act as a spur to activity and I am keen to capture the opportunities that this presents us with to move initiatives and policies forward.

Our thanks to Dr Sanja Bogojević

This week my thanks go to Sanja who is an Associate Professor of Law, Fellow and Tutor in Law, Lady Margaret Hall. Sanja has sent me a health check curriculum tool that is being used by the Law Faculty following an important conversation at the Faculty meeting about de-clonising and de-gendering the curriculum earlier this year. I had a valuable conversation with Sanja about a prospective student from Africa who were gave an offer to this year who had to turn it down because of lack of funds. Sanja has added this as an item on the Faculty equality and Diversity Committee in the hope that we can begin to think about establishing a new scholarship.

And…to the President of Wolfson, Tim Hitchens

I have also begun discussion with the President of Wolfson this week about the College working with the Centre in establishing a scholarship for a black research student.

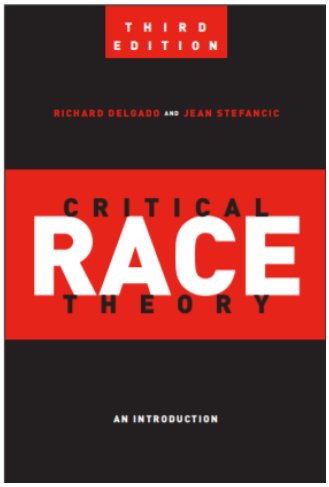
De-colonising the curriculum: What are you reading?

In GPC this week we discussed the need to ensure that the work of people of colour is being represented in the reading lists we set our students. Several of you have written to me about this issue and asked for more focus on race in our methodology course. The following is my list of three classic texts that have influenced my work that we might think about including in our curriculum.

Kimberle Crenshaw

Kimberle has to be my first choice! For the uninitiated she is one of the founders of the field of critical race theory. While at Harvard Law School, she was one of the founding organizers of the Critical Race Theory Workshop which originated the term. She is probably best known for developing the theory of intersectionality which she first developed in her paper: "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics." Other classics include: Critical race theory : the key writings that formed the movement by Kimberlé Crenshaw; Neil Gotanda; Gary Peller; Kendall Thomas , New York Press 1995

Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic



In 2001, Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic published *Critical Race Theory,* a compact introduction to the field that explains the origins, principal themes, leading voices, and new directions of this important movement in legal thought. This has since become a seminal text in the field and outlines the uncomfortable relationship that critical race theorists have sometimes had with the critical legal studies movement. My much thumbed first edition of this book continues to be used and loaned out to students. See also: Critical Race Theory: The Cutting Edge (2013) by Jean Stefancic Richard Delgado. The third edition has been updated to include the Black Lives Matter movement, the presidency of Barack Obama and the rise of hate speech on the Internet.

Clark Cunningham

Some of you will know that Clark Cunningham's article on lawyer as translator is one I set for a lot of my courses. This is a true story told by a white liberal Professor who ran a clinical legal education programme in the US. He recounts how a black defendant made him reflect on his own assumptions about the purpose of legal advice. It is the story of how the law punished a man for speaking about his legal rights and how after punishing him it silenced him. Cunningham, C.D., 1991. Lawyer as translator representation as text: Towards an ethnography of legal discourse. *Cornell L. Rev.*, *77*, p.1298.

Going National

I am currently in discussion with the SLSA about how we take our conversation about de-colonising the curriculum to the national level and share resources. If you are a

member of the SLSA look out for a notice about this initiative in the SLSA weekly email. We are also planning to curate a collection of statements from Socio-Legal law schools/Centre on the matter. Please get the suggestions flowing.

Celebrating aspects of our history

Sonia Sorabji was the first woman to graduate from the University of Bombay, and the first woman and the first Indian to read for the BCL in Oxford. Sorabji became the first woman to practise law in India. You can find out more about Sonia and other black female pioneers such as Mithan Tata, Dame Bobbie Cheema-Grubb, Stephanie Boyce, Baroness Scotland, Khata Sapnara, Shami Chakrabarti, Sandie Okoro and Dame Linda Dobbs at: https://first100years.org.uk/

Inspiring Legal Lives?

Linda Dobbs, the first person of colour appointed to the senior judiciary of England and Wales.

This project which is being run by Linda and Dvora at the Centre is investigating the lack of diversity in the upper echelons of the legal professions in England and Wales and the relative invisibility of women lawyers in positions of power. We aim to understand the reasons why women continue to face discrimination in the legal arena in the twenty first century and to raise the profile of inspiring women lawyers whose work is little known beyond their professional field. This project is being carried out in partnership with National Life Stories and life story interviews conducted with inspiring women lawyers will form part of the Sound Archive at the British Library. We are interested in finding out about the life experiences of a diversity of women lawyers, particularly from working-class backgrounds; those who came to England and Wales as migrants or refugees; women of Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) heritage; from lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer groups (LGBTQ+); women with disabilities, and those working in less well-known areas of law.

One of the issues we have been debating which is especially pertinent in the context of the BLM debate is the idea of celebration. On the one hand we want to celebrate the achievements of those who have broken through the glass ceiling, not least because they are a source of inspiration to others that come in their wake. But we have also been thinking about how we get at those who did not make it through the glass ceiling and deserved to. How do we label this group without being negative (they almost made it?). We have also been exploring how we engage with those who work in arenas such as law centres where collective achievement is often valued beyond individual achievement. One member of our advisory board has suggested:

> "I am cautious about celebrating. It tends to make one think (or other people think), well, we've got here now, and can look back and celebrate those who paved the way. But we haven't got here now, so it is better to focus on understanding, …remembering, and identifying with, and *learning from* (not from their individual lives exactly but from the obstacles they faced, the battles they fought, the opposition by [people] and institutions, and how they – women as a group – dealt with these."

Getting the focus right has meant that we have recently conducted a survey in which we have asked a wide range of people who they think should be celebrated and why. We anticipate that an article on this issue will be the first output from the project.

Resources

Decolonising the Curriculum: https://www.soas.ac.uk/blogs/study/decolonising-curriculum-whats-the-fuss/
Decolonising the curriculum good practice: https://www.ucl.ac.uk/social-historical-sciences/news-events/events/decolonising-curriculum-week-2019
Law Faculty Equality and Diversity Initiatives: https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/about-us/equality-and-diversity
University Equality and Diversity Unit's advice on race related issues: https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/race

Coronavirus

Advice on the virus is likely to change regularly. Please:

- Contact Linda or your supervisor if you have any concerns, need support or know someone else in CSLS who does. We will do everything we can to support you.
- The health, welfare and safety of students and staff is the number one priority for the University. The University continues to update its advice for students and staff about coronavirus (COVID-19) on the University website. Find out about the virus and how to protect yourself on the NHS website. Read what you need to know about coronavirus (COVID-19) on Public Health England's website.
- Keep in touch with us and each other.

If you have something you would like to be included in the next Thursday newsletter then please email Linda.